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ABSTRACT

Presented are findings of a survey of 38 state child find coordinators. Summarized are responses to the five survey questions: is your 1977-78 child find program primarily a local, statewide, or a combination effort; how many, and what types of children were found; would you rate your state's child find efforts as generally successful or unsuccessful; what role do you see certain advocacy groups playing in child find programs; and what do you see as being in the future for state child find programs. A table is included which breaks down number and types of children found by state. (SBH)

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CHILD FIND DATA

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE DIRECTORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION, INCORPORATED

NASDSE

A Report of Feedback Information
Collected by the National Office

December, 1977

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Report of Feedback Request for Child Find Data

This is a report of a recent NASDSE survey of state child find coordinators who were asked to respond briefly to five information items:

- Is your 1977-78 child find program primarily a local, statewide or a combination effort?
- How many, and what types of children were "found" (e.g., preschool, certain handicapping conditions, etc.)?
- You would rate your state's child find efforts as (generally) successful or unsuccessful?
- What role do you see certain advocacy groups playing in child find programs?
- What do you see as being in the future for state child find programs?

The NASDSE survey was mailed in October and by mid-December, 38 responses were received by the National Office. It is hoped that the information presented on the following pages will be helpful to SEA child find coordinators and to NASDSE members in better understanding the status of "Child Find" nationally.

We wish to acknowledge our appreciation to the persons who responded to the survey request, and to Sharon Berry, NASDSE Intern from Gallaudet College in Washington, D.C. for compiling and synthesizing the information into this report.

The listing of comments and the discussion sections are presented below, question-by-question, and represent typical responses and a synthesis of responses.

- Is your 1977-78 child find program primarily...

  4 responded local effort
  5 responded statewide effort
  29 responded combination

- Briefly, how many and what types of children were found (e.g., preschool, certain types of handicapping conditions, etc.)

  Respondents mentioned emphasis on the areas of preschool populations, severely and profoundly handicapped and unserved populations. Greater numerical finds were indicated for preschool and mentally retarded children, while most respondents indicated finds across all ages and categories of handicapping conditions.

For those reporting numerical data, the findings ranged from 15 to 129,000. Nine states reported less than 1,000 finds, six states reported finds ranging from 1,000 to 6,000 and two states reported finds in excess of 6,000. Several states reported that these data were still in the process of being collected. The finds of six states reporting exact numerical data represented 1% to 3% of the number of handicapped children receiving services in those states in 1977. Although these percentages are dependent on the level of services offered in those states, they possibly represent a trend. Data as reported by each state are contained in Table I.

- You would rate your statewide child find efforts as (generally)...

Thirty-five respondents indicated successful child find systems. Some comments were:

- We can project a tremendous increase in the number of children located and served
- Our project has succeeded in organizing a network, developing and disseminating unified materials, and offering consultation as needed
- We made three improvements over previous years, all with VI-B funds: 1) standardized statewide awareness materials, 2) developed a computerized tracking system, and 3) started mobile diagnostic teams

Only two respondents reported unsuccessful child find systems. One indicated the system for preschool children finds was inadequate and the other indicated that the system was only marginally effective. Additionally, two problem areas were identified by other respondents: 1) locating handicapped children in special populations, e.g., school dropouts, and 2) confidentiality problems which made location and followup difficult.

- What role do you see advocacy groups (e.g., state and local associations for retarded citizens) playing in child find programs?

Thirty-six of the 38 respondents emphasized the vital role of advocacy groups. They viewed their roles as including:

- Legislative influence
- Public awareness campaigns
- Volunteer services
- Support for local and state programs
- Making referrals
- Providing moral support
- Sharing human and material resources
- Cooperation in placing children
- Disseminating information
- Encouraging parents to become aware of needs of their special children

- Monitoring
- Counseling parents of handicapped children
- Assisting in the location of "out of school" children
- Publication of child find activities
- Helping parents and children obtain their educational right
- Participation in planning and representation on child find advisory committees
- Receivers of referrals for children outside of school age

- What do you see as being in the future for state child find programs? Where do we go from here?

"An ongoing information and referral system for families needing assistance in locating programs or obtaining appropriate services from existing programs."

This statement characterizes the majority of the responses. The general opinion was that child find activities would reach a maintenance level requiring identification of a small continuing population (births, mobile families, etc.) and the development of techniques to identify handicaps in special populations, e.g., school dropouts. The responsibility for the program will continue to be shared by the SEA and LEA with the suggestion that the child find activities become a part of the continuing programs for pupil assessment and evaluation. Other specific comments and suggestions regarding the SEA role included:

- Technical assistance for local child find programs
- Public awareness media provided at state level
- Training support
- Monitoring local programs
- Provision for followup systems
- Public census generating private reporting
- Coordinating and directing local activities
- Reassessment activities for students previously identified
- Timing public awareness efforts to August and September when most "new Kids" are located
- Placement of program activities in a project focusing on parenting and interagency cooperation
- Continue as a child advocate
- Child find was an "informative effort". Now, what we need is an "instructional effort".
- Provision of invaluable data for planning and input to the legislature
- Foster assessment--placement procedures

Child Find activities in the states were successful as measured against expectation criteria. However, the systems were not free from implementation problems. Additionally, the future role of state find programs needs clarification, according to several respondents.

TABLE 1

State	Number of Children Found in 77-78 Child Find Program	Comments: Types of children (e.g., preschool, school age) or predominant handicapping condition
Alabama	500	Multiply handicapped
Alaska	---	Preschool - Down's syndrome
American Samoa	185	EMR-TMR majority of children found
Arizona	---	attached report
Arkansas	653	Unserved children, half preschoolers, remainder severe and profound
California	---	No data available at this time
Colorado	---	No response
Connecticut	---	Approximately 1200 children evaluated. Data now being analyzed.
Delaware	---	Data not available at time of report
Florida	1,385	Including EMR, TMR, PMR, ED, PH, Socially Maladjusted, VI, HOH, Deaf, Speech and Language, Deaf-Blind
Georgia	30,519	29,491 school age, 1,028 preschool
Idaho	---	Preschool, developmental delays
Indiana	---	77-78 data not yet available
Iowa	7,000	3,500 preschool in last two years 2,500 school age in the last year
Kansas	984	Attached report
Maine	179	Preschool and school age, enclosed list of handicapping conditions
Maryland	---	Preschool, handicapping conditions were MR and speech, hearing and language problems
Massachusetts	186	Age 3-5, 74; 16-22, 64; 13-15, 24; enclosed report on types of conditions
Michigan	---	Do not reflect 0-3 population, mild to moderate handicaps of EI, LD and EMI
Minnesota	---	Preschool, dropouts
Mississippi	6,000	approximately, not broken down by category
Missouri	129,000	all handicaps and reported from age 0-21
Nevada	304	in all disability categories and age categories
New Hampshire	15	Severe retardation, severe multiple handicaps
New Jersey	900	Preschool and school age
New Mexico	444	The majority were school age and severely and profoundly handicapped
New York		All
North Carolina		No response
Ohio		Results not collected and tabulated
Oregon		Being conducted now
Pennsylvania	---	Best accounting of preschool handicapped ever--the number of preschool children served was approximately 2500
South Carolina	4,581	Information not available on age and condition
South Dakota	---	Preschool, MR, Blind, LD, PH and MH

TABLE 1 (cont'd)

State	Number of Children Found in 77-78 Child Find Program	Comments: Types of children (e.g., preschool, school age) or predominant handicapping condition
Tennessee	---	Emphasis was on preschool and unserved
Texas	2,487	Enclosed report of ages and conditions, 54.5% ages 3-5, majority were MR
Trust Territory	---	No data had come in
Virginia	---	Information not available, handicaps varied
Wyoming	2,000	Mostly preschool and post 18 year old youths